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RURAL AREAS
DEVELOPMENT

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NEWSLETTER

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THEY WERE "IN A PICKLE" -- BUT NOT ANY MORE

During the past 3 years, farmers of the Ribera-Villanueva Valley in San Miguel County, New Mexico, had to accept whatever price they could get for their cucumbers, and they had to truck them 140 miles to find buyers.

Looking for ways to strengthen their income and bargaining power, they decided to form a co-op.

With help from Soil Conservation Service, Extension Service, and Farmers Home Administration (FHA), the farmers organized the Pecos Valley Vegetable and Fruit Co-op.

They combined a \$25,000 FHA loan with local funds and built a processing plant at the historic village of San Miguel. A newly-drilled artesian well furnishes water for curing the cucumbers.

The plant can handle 150 acres of cucumbers. Co-op members plan to install a cold storage plant to make handling of fruits and vegetables easier. Adequate production is already signed up to keep the plant busy.

As a result of local initiative and timely assistance, the farmers are now getting a premium price for their cucumbers.

JOB OPPORTUNITIES DO INCREASE POPULATION

A University of Tennessee study reveals the trend of population loss by rural Tennessee counties has been dramatically reversed.

Warren County, scene of major local development efforts, much of it involving the Farmers Home Administration as well as other USDA agencies, increased its population almost 3,000 during the 5-year period between 1960 and 1965. Neighboring counties also showed increases, as job opportunities increased in Warren.

Some 84 Tennessee counties showed population increases during the 5-year period. This contrasted sharply with losses by 59 rural counties in the earlier 1950-1960 period.

MODEL HOUSE IS MAJOR LEARNING AREA

Extension home economists and local program aides have turned a low-income house in Winston-Salem, North Carolina, into a neighborhood demonstration and learning area.

The agents, aides, and local people -- using money provided by the Office of Economic Opportunity -- bought and remodeled used furniture, built storage spaces, and made mattresses, curtains, and spreads for the three-room house for less than \$500 to show what could be done on a small budget.

Many people who have visited the house have signed up for courses on food preparation, use of food stamps, sewing and mattress making, and other low-cost home management phases of the program. Extension agents have concentrated on training and helping the program aides, who work directly with the homemakers by personal visits, demonstration meetings, and through 112 home management clubs which meet monthly.

LINCOLN HILLS -- TOP NOTCH RC&D PROJECT

Lincoln Hills Resource Conservation and Development project in southern Indiana, the first of 41 such projects approved for USDA assistance, has shown big progress during its four year existence.

A recent study of the million acre plus project shows: Average weekly employment, up 11.4 percent over a year earlier; average weekly wages, up 8.7 percent; total payroll earnings, up 13.3 percent. Banks and farm equipment dealers report business at an all-time high. Livestock dealers report increases in numbers and value of livestock sold. Eight weekly newspapers report growing circulation. New construction in the area includes a high school in one county and a modern medical and dental clinic in another.

A FOREST PRODUCTS INDUSTRY IS BORN

A thriving new industry, Toledo Products, Inc., has created a new payroll employing 34 persons for Lincoln County, Oregon.

It all started in 1961, when a Toledo man saw waste lumber, edgings, and slab from the local sawmill being burned. He discussed with local foresters the possibility of making small commercial items out of the scrap lumber. A corporation was formed by community leaders with help from State and Federal Forest Service members of the county Technical Action Panel and the county Rural Areas Development Committee.

It was plant policy to hire elderly, handicapped, and retired people and put their industry and skills to work to pick up the local economy.

ZONING OUTLINED IN NEW PUBLICATION

A new publication, "Zoning -- an aid to community resource development" (PA-814), has been released by the Department of Agriculture.

The publication is a guide to understanding the objectives and process of land-use zoning and related functions of local government, in relation to community resource development. It was published by the Federal Extension Service.

Copies are available for 15 cents each from the Superintendent of Documents, U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C. 20402.

RESORT COMPLEX CONSIDERED GROWTH FACTOR

A planned \$20 million resort complex on Lake Monroe is expected to be a major factor in future growth for Lawrence County, Indiana.

So far, the county has attracted new industry that employs 525 persons. Some 50 retail and service businesses have opened in the Bedford area alone. Seven industrial firms are expanding. The communities of Bedford and Mitchell matched \$1.4 million in economic development grants for water systems and roads to serve industrial areas.

And the planned resort complex is expected to add \$1 million to local payrolls by 1970.

WATERSHED PROJECT TO REDUCE FLOOD DAMAGES

The largest watershed protection project authorized in Alabama -- covering 240,600 acres in four counties -- is now under way.

For years, the Choccolocco and other creeks have flooded fertile bottom-lands in the four-county area.

The project is expected to cut flood damage by 89 percent when it is completed in about 5 years.

Eleven flood retaining structures and 52.5 miles of channel improvement will protect 350 landowners in the flood plain of the Choccolocco Creek Watershed project. Two lakes that will be created have been designated for municipal water supply and two other lakes will be reserved for recreation development.

The estimated project cost of \$9.6 million is being shared by local citizens and the Federal Government. Sponsors include the county commissioner's courts and the local soil conservation districts in Calhoun, Clay, Talladega, and Cleburne Counties, the Choccolocco Creek Watershed Conservancy District, and the Anniston Water and Sewage Board. Also instrumental are Soil Conservation Service, Farmers Home Administration, Forest Service, the State Conservation Department, the Anniston Chamber of Commerce, local bankers, businessmen, and landowners.

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THE ONE THAT DIDN'T GET AWAY

Some 17,000 pounds of pompano, a fish considered by many to be THE delicacy of the deep, came flying into the nation's capital recently to give a Florida fisherman's cooperative a new boost up the ladder toward success.

The pompano went to a supermarket chain in "the largest direct sale of pompano" in the history of that fish, according to Secretary of Agriculture Orville L. Freeman.

Publicity over the sale captured the interest of cafeteria operators in two of Washington, D.C.'s largest Federal buildings -- the Pentagon and Agriculture. They are now exploring the possibility of regular shipments for their lunch tables.

The cooperative was established seven months ago with a \$245,000 Economic Opportunity loan from USDA's Farmers Home Administration.

The majority of the original 74 members earned well below the \$3,000 poverty level. But at their new current rate of income, co-op members are expected to earn an average of close to \$5,000 a year. Already 20 new members have been added. The members have an additional 75 men working on their boats, each worker sharing in a percentage of the catch.

Before the co-op was organized, each fisherman had to find his own market. If their combined catches were large, they glutted the local market and the price dropped.

Now the co-op pays cash for each catch; washes, draws, and grades the catch, then sells it immediately or packs it in ice to hold for a higher market.

One third of the loan money was used to buy a lot and two-story fish house, which serves as a combination processing and refrigerated storage plant and office. The remaining money is being held for operating capital. Any co-op income left after the expenses of loan payment and operation will go to the members as dividends.